

School Health Advisory Council

What is it?

A School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is a group of individuals that advise on the services, programs, and strategies used by a school to address the health and well-being of students and staff and their families.

- Clear sense of mission and role—Members need to understand and accept their role as advisory to the school administration and school board. Common issues addressed by a SHAC include school nutrition, physical activity, school safety, tobacco use prevention, etc... These can be effectively addressed through school policy, environmental changes, and evidence-based programs and interventions.
- Inclusive membership—SHAC membership should reflect the diversity of the community and include a variety of experiences and expertise. Consider the mission and role of the council before selecting the members and make sure they can fulfill their obligations as a SHAC member. Education, health care, human services, public health, law enforcement, clergy, business, parent, and student representatives could all be included on a council.

Contribution

The unique contribution that a SHAC makes to a school is in the ability of the council to connect and coordinate the efforts of everyone working towards the health and well-being of students and staff and their families. The council can provide guidance on long range program planning, enhance communication between service providers from a variety of disciplines, represent diverse points of view, and increase the potential resources and impacts on the issues being addressed.